



JAPAN P&I NEWS

To the Members

USA—Hidden Hazards Created by Systemic Failures in Gas Detection Practices

We have obtained information regarding a Marine Safety Alert issued by the United States Coast Guard (USCG) concerning deficiencies in gas detection equipment and gas testing procedures on bulk carriers transporting cargoes capable of emitting flammable or toxic gases, such as coal.

Following investigations into explosion casualties on coal carriers, the USCG highlights recurring deficiencies, including the use of improper calibration gas, uncalibrated instruments, incorrect regulator fitment (using fixed-flow instead of demand-flow regulators), and crew unfamiliarity with proper operation. For full details, please refer to the [USCG Marine Safety Alert 13-26](#).

Members are encouraged to ensure that inspection items and management procedures based on this alert are not treated as a one-off exercise, but are integrated into their daily safety management to maintain and enhance practical effectiveness.

- **Prompt ship-shore coordination upon voyage inquiry and fixture**
For bulk carriers, it is essential that the vessel and management company verify equipment compatibility based on the hazardous nature of the intended cargo (e.g., operational condition of gas detectors, suitability and expiration date of span gas and manufacturer-specified regulator type) upon receiving an initial cargo inquiry from charterers or operators. In the event that voyage instructions are received without prior inquiry and necessary equipment is found to be lacking or incompatible, it is recommended to establish mechanisms to immediately coordinate with management companies to consult/adjust with charterers or operators or arrange shore procurement, ensuring that proper equipment is prepared and supplied prior to loading.
- **Conducting training during pre-cargo Toolbox Meetings (Ensuring practical effectiveness)**
To prevent verification tasks from becoming purely administrative and to ensure practical effectiveness on site, it is effective to continuously conduct training using actual equipment during pre-cargo Toolbox Meetings. Continuous repetition helps maintain crew familiarity across the vessel even when crew rotations occur, leading to a system that consistently ensures reliable inspections.
- **Management under the SMS and sharing at Shipboard Safety and Health Committee meetings (Fostering a safety culture)**
We suggest sharing the contents of this Safety Alert and the periodic equipment lists managed under the Safety Management System (SMS) at Shipboard Safety and Health Committee meetings, using this opportunity for the crew to discuss why these checks are necessary. Furthermore, when management companies provide feedback on submitted reports and supply statuses, this two-way communication helps ensure that SMS

procedures do not become mere administrative steps, fostering a strong safety culture and a shared sense of ownership across both ship and shore.

We will continue to provide the latest information and technical insights to assist our Members in preventing accidents.

Yours faithfully,

The Japan Ship Owners' Mutual Protection & Indemnity Association